



Mary Lazich

Wisconsin State Senator
Senate District 28

**Senate Committee on Judiciary, Corrections, and
Housing
Testimony Senate Bill 476
March 4, 2008**

Good afternoon Committee Chair Taylor and committee members. Thank you for the public hearing on Senate Bill 476. Senate Bill 476 is follow-up legislation to 2005 Wisconsin Act 448, that gave children awaiting adoption the right to be adopted into the family of an already adopted sibling. Children in foster care or awaiting adoption under the law now have the opportunity to grow up with a sibling rather than a stranger.

Currently sibling visitation ceases upon termination of parental visitation. Senate Bill 476 allows siblings to continue visitation in the event parental visitation is terminated. This bill is a logical step to take now that the state allows siblings to be adopted into the same family.

A constituent with much experience as a foster parent brought this problem to my attention. She was disturbed that upon the appropriate termination of parent visitation, the children were not allowed to continue sibling visitation. Under the bill, if it is in the best interest of the child/children visitation is to be allowed.

I worked with the Department of Health and Family Services and Adoption/Out of Home Care Committee of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. Colleen M. Ellingson, the chair of that



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committee and the Chief Executive Officer of Adoption Resources of Wisconsin supports this legislation.

The children must be of utmost importance and consideration during this sad and tragic event in their lives. Please support Senate Bill 476 allowing siblings to continue visitation and prevent children from experiencing further separation, disruption, and confusion.